[English]

Extradition of Italian Businessman

5148. SHRI P. KODANDA RAMAIAH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether some diplomatic exercise to extradite Italian Businessman Octavio Quattrocchi involved in the Bofors payoff case has been initiated;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the progress made in this regard;

(c) whether Malaysian Government has failed to execute the arrest Warrant of Italian businessman despite existence of Commonwealth extradition scheme between India and Malaysia;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) and (b) A team of CBI officers visited Malaysia from 14.2.97 to 18.2.97 and through diplomatic channels contacted the concerned Malaysian authorities to ascertain the legal formalities, procedures and evidentiary requirements to enable processing of the extradition request by the Malaysian authorities. However, it has been decided to initiate the process only after further material has been collected in this regard as investigations within India and outside are under progress and certain Letters Rogatory have been/are being sent for investigation to various countries.

(c) and (d) The Commonwealth Extradition Scheme is only recommendatory in nature and not binding. Extradition agreements between countries are either on the basis of a bilateral extradition treaty or on the basis of an arrangement. With Malaysia, India neither has an extradition treaty nor any arrangement for the extradition of fugitive offenders.

(e) However, the Malaysian authorities have indicated their willingness to cooperate with India provided the legal formalities, procedures and evidentiary requirements under Malaysian laws are fulfilled.

[Translation]

Loan to Farmers

5149. SHRI R.L.P. VERMA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government had announced to waive loans of the farmers to the tune of Rs. 10 thousand and if so, whether the same has been implemented in several States;

(b) the reasons for recovering the loans by the banks from the farmers of Giridih, Kodarma and Hazaribagh of Bihar by attachment and increasing the interest 4-5 fold

(c) whether the Government propose to waive their loans;

(d) if not, whether to provide relief to the farmers the Government would realise principal amount only in 3-4 instalments; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) Yes, Sir. In the year 1990 Government of India announced a debt relief scheme called "Agricultural and Rural Debt Relief (ARDR) Scheme, 1990", whereby the loans availed by farmers, landless labourers, artisans and weavers in rural areas who were unable to repay the accumulated dues as on 2nd October, 1989 to Public Sector Banks and Regional Rural Banks, were written off subject to a maximum of Rs. 10,000/- per borrower. On similar lines, schemes were formulated by State Governments for borrowers of cooperatives in which case Government of India shared 50% of the burden on account of debt relief provided. The scheme came to end on 31st March 1991 in all States and Union Territories except the States of Assam and Jammu & Kashmir where it ended on 30 June, 1991. Final settlement of claims were made and the period of scheme was treated as 31 March 1995.

(b) The recovery of loans and advances including to agriculture is a continuing process undertaken by credit institutions. The recoveries are made having due regard to terms and conditions governing such loans and advances and necessary provisions of law.

(c) to (e) The ARDR Scheme, 1990 was a one time measure. No such proposals are under the consideration of the Central Government.

[English]

Import of Rough Opthalmic Blanks

5150. SHRI E. AHAMED :
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether clearance of Rough Opthalmic Blanks ROB for corrective spectacles has been stopped by Commissioner of Customs-I New Customs House, near IGI Airport against the Bill of Entries filled by importers during July/ October, 1996 and the matter is under investigation by SIIB, New Customs House since these consignments were heavily under-invoiced;

(b) if so, the details of such importers alongwith their consignments;

(c) whether these importers have been issued show cause notices in the month of March, 1997 for loading the under-invoiced amount into under-invoiced price and thereafter charging customs duty on such enhanced price thereby saving themselves from FERA cases, CBI and Sales tax enquiries;

(d) if so, the reasons for not referring this import scam to all the above authorities for investigating their past imports during the last three years in which they have saved